THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. November 12, 1943 Heshvan 14, 5704 No. 14

EDITORIALS
- *Secession*
- *The White Paper Must Be Repealed*
- *The Future of the National Refugee Service*

JUDAISM AS PERSONAL SALVATION
By Asher Block

BOOK NOTES
By Samuel Dinin

MUSIC NOTES
By Judith K. Eisenstein

REALITIES AND VALUES

CORRESPONDENCE

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Mordecai M. Kaplan
Associate Chairman: Ira Eisenstein
Managing Editor: Eugene Kohn

Associate Editors: Israel S. Chipkin, Samuel Dinin, Abraham G. Duker, Judith K. Eisenstein, Solomon Goldman, Jacob S. Golub, Bernard Heller, Philip Houtz, Samuel C. Kohs, Milton R. Konvitz, Theodore N. Lewis, Milton Steinberg.

Contributing Editors: Michael Alper, Nathan A. Barack, Shlomo Bardin, Morton M. Berman, Philip S. Bernstein, Asher Block, Samuel M. Blumenfield, Ben Zion Bokser, William J. Boxerman, Mortimer J. Cohen, Miriam R. Ephraim, Harry Essrig, Emanuel Gamoran, Judah I. Goldin, Robert Gordis, Emanuel Green, Max Kadushin, Louis M. Levitsky, Joshua Loth Liebman, I. D. Minzberg, Edward T. Sandrow, Simon Shetzer, Joshua Trachtenberg, Leo Trepp, Jacob J. Weinstein, Max Wiener.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Rabbi Asher Block is one of our Contributing Editors. He is rabbi of Temple Israel of Great Neck, Long Island.

—o—

A SUGGESTION

Use *The Reconstructionist* not only for individual reading but also for group study.

To assist societies and other groups who may wish to base their educational program, in whole or in part, on a study of contemporary Jewish life as it is reflected and commented on in *The Reconstructionist,* we have prepared

STUDY AIDS

in connection with each issue. If you wish to take advantage of this service, please inform our office.

NOW OBTAINABLE

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST DIARY FOR 5704

Contents include:
A statement on the proposed Religious Fellowship
The Reconstructionist Platform
Criteria of Jewish Loyalty
Reconstructionism in Action
An interpretive version of Weekday Morning Prayers.

Price 25c.

The following pamphlets are also obtainable:

1. THE MEANING OF RECONSTRUCTIONISM, by Mordecai M. Kaplan.
2. THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST VIEWPOINT, by Mordecai M. Kaplan.
3. TO BE OR NOT TO BE A JEW, by Milton Steinberg.
4. TOWARD A GUIDE FOR JEWISH RITUAL USAGE.
5. ZIONISM (two articles)—
   Zionism and the New Opposition, by Milton Steinberg.
   Reconstructionism and Zionism, by Ira Eisenstein.

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST PLATFORM.

To obtain Reconstructionist literature, or further information regarding Reconstructionism, apply to

THE JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FOUNDATION, Inc.
15 West Eighty-Sixth Street, New York 24, N. Y.
Telephone: SChuyler 4-7000

THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. November 12, 1943 Heshvan 14, 5704 No. 14

EDITORIALS

SECESSION

THE universal rejoicing which greeted the unity achieved by the American Jewish Conference has proved premature. On the American Jewish Committee must rest the onus for having plunged not only American Jewry but world-Jewry into bitter disappointment and deep despondency by its ill-considered decision to withdraw from the Conference. Surely such action should not have been taken without the most compelling reasons. It inevitable weakness the power of American Jewry in negotiating with the nations for the security and freedom of our people after the war. It is hard, in view of the mischief done, to speak dispassionately about the Committee's secession. Nevertheless, we shall endeavor to analyze objectively the main arguments brought forward by the American Jewish Committee to justify its action.

The Committee contends that "the salvation and rehabilitation of the stricken Jews of Europe cannot be achieved through Palestine alone and certainly not through over-emphasis on the political constitution of Palestine." The American Jewish Conference never maintained that it could be so achieved. The Conference adopted a number of resolutions with reference to immediate rescue work, the protection of Jewish rights in the post-war treaties, and the banning of anti-Semitism.

But the main burden of the Committee's case lies in its opposition to the Jewish Commonwealth. In order not to appear indifferent to Jewish aspirations concerning Palestine, the Committee offers its own program as an alternative to a Jewish Commonwealth. It urges the repeal of the British White Paper with its restrictions on immigration and land purchase and then continues: "Concerning Palestine, it (i.e. the American Jewish Committee) approves for the present an international trusteeship responsible to the United Nations, for the following purposes: To safeguard the Jewish settlement in, and immigration into, Palestine and to guarantee adequate scope for future growth and development to the full extent of the economic absorptive capacity of the country; to safeguard and protect the fundamental rights of all inhabitants . . . and to prepare the country to become, within a reasonable period of years, a self-governing commonwealth."

In a word, the American Jewish Committee wants a Palestinian commonwealth

at some future time, but is indifferent as to whether it will be Jewish or not. It would leave to the Mandatory Power to determine at what stage Palestine might be considered ready to become a self-governing community. It thus blandly overlooks the fact that, if this should happen before the Jews achieved a majority in the land, Palestine would inevitably be an Arab state and the Jewish *Yishuv* would be reduced to a ghetto in Palestine, under conditions no less precarious than those of the ghettos of Europe.

To be sure the Committee advocates "adequate scope for future growth and development to the full extent of the economic absorptive capacity of the country," but who is to determine the absorptive capacity? The Committee speaks of an "International trusteeship." Great Britain now exercises such a trusteeship under the League of Nations. Is the absorptive capacity then to be determined by the same bureaucrats of the Colonial Office that are responsible for the White Paper policy which the Committee itself condemns? Do not the members of the Committee know that "absorptive capacity" is no fixed quantity and that the government of Palestine, by taxation and other legislation, can put such obstacles in the way of its industrial and agricultural development as would keep the absorptive capacity down to a minimum?

The unmistakable intent of the Mandate, which incorporates the Balfour Declaration, was that Palestine should eventually become a Jewish Commonwealth —without prejudice, to be sure, to the rights of the non-Jewish population. What other meaning could there be to the word "National Home of the Jewish people" as applied to Palestine? The political status of Palestine as defined in the Mandate reckons with the acknowledged "historic connection of the Jewish people" with the land. That connection is the major premise of both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. A Palestinian state with an Arab majority, —which nothing in the program of the American Jewish Committee would preclude,—would certainly not be a Jewish National Home. Such a state would not even tolerate a national home for the Jewish people *in* Palestine. Only if Palestine is unequivocally designated as harboring a future Jewish Commonwealth is there any ground for insisting on freedom of Jewish immigration into Palestine.

No Zionist has ever dreamed of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine which could claim the political allegiance of Jews residing in the diaspora. When, therefore, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, president of the American Jewish Committee says in a press conference," We affirm and reaffirm that whatever government be established ultimately in Palestine, there can be no *political identification* of Jews outside of Palestine with such government," he is making a statement which is either irrelevant to the American Jewish Committee's resignation from the Conference or is a deliberate and unwarranted attempt to cast aspersion on the loyalty of Zionists to America. We challenge Judge Proskauer to quote a single statement in the resolution adopted by the American Jewish Conference with reference to a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine which would imply that it would have any claim on the political allegiance of American Jews.

The members of the American Jewish Committee are of course entitled to their own opinions. They were entitled to express them at the Conference and they did so. But they had no right to secede from the Conference when they were outvoted. Whatever the technical rules permitting an organization to withdraw from the Conference, there was no moral

justification for secession. A good technical case could have been made for the secession of the southern states from the Union on constitutional grounds, but American democracy has followed Lincoln in condemning secessionism as destructive of democracy.

Judge Proskauer justifies the decision of the Committee on the ground of conscientious scruples against being identified with action of which it does not approve. Granted. But does that entitle the Committee to sabotage such action? Has a conscientious pacifist the right to interfere with the draft? If the Committee does not, on principle, approve the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, it is entirely within its rights. But has it the right to defy the will of the majority of the Jewish people and advocate the creation of a Commonwealth which cannot be anything but Arab? The only decent thing for the Committee to do would be to keep silent and to refrain from making any declaration about Palestine. For the Committee to consider itself part of the Jewish community, and yet to feel free to thwart the articulate will of the majority within that community, is both disloyal and undemocratic.

By seceding from the American Jewish Conference, the American Jewish Committee has therefore virtually seceded from American Jewry of which the Conference is the democratically elected spokesman. The Committee has thus forfeited the right to speak on behalf of American Jews. The public should now be informed that the American Jewish Committee has no standing whatsoever in the Jewish world. Not only is it unrepresentative of the will and purpose of American Jewry; it has definitely and deliberately set itself in opposition to that will and purpose, at least as far as Palestine is concerned.

THE WHITE PAPER MUST BE REPEALED

THE British White Paper for Palestine wil be completely implemented in March, 1944, unless the Jews of the world, and especially American Jewry, can take last-minute measures to prevent it.

The White Paper has already restricted the larger portion of the area of Palestine from purchases by the Jews, and now it threatens to strike at the very life of Jewish effort in Palestine, namely, at immigration. According to the provisions of the White Paper, all immigration into Palestine is to cease at the close of five years (March, 1944) except by consent of the Arabs, which is of course tantamount to saying that immigration will be completely closed. Further, the Paper plans to terminate the Mandate and to make all of Palestine an Arab state with a Jewish minority, as in the countries of the Diaspora. Palestine is to remain the concern only of Palestinian Jews. The Jewish people outside of Palestine, to whom the Balfour Declaration was given, are hereafter to be completely ignored.

Britain accepted the Mandate over Palestine in order to carry out the promise of the Balfour Declaration. That declaration was given not to the Jews of Palestine but to the Jews the world over. The White Paper clearly repudiates a promise solemnly undertaken before the entire world. That the better elements in Britain recognize the depths to which British honor is sinking is evidenced by the declaration of no less important a personage than the Prime Minister himself during a Parliamentary declaration on the White Paper. In that debate Mr. Churchill declared, among other things: "I select the one point upon which there is plainly a breach and repudiation of the Balfour Declaration—the provision that

Jewish immigration can be stopped in five years' time by the decision of an Arab majority. That is a plain breach of a solemn obligation. . . ."

On the question to whom the declaration was addressed, Mr. Churchill says:

"To whom was the pledge of the Balfour Declaration made? It was not made to the Jews of Palestine. It was not made to those who were actually living in Palestine. It was made to world Jewry and in particular to the Zionist associations. . . . This pledge of a home of refuge, of an asylum, was not made to the Jews of Palestine but to the Jews outside Palestine, to that vast, unhappy mass of scattered, persecuted, wandering Jews whose intense, unchanging, unconquerable desire has been for a national home. . . .

"If the Government, with their superior knowledge of the deficiencies in our armaments which have arisen during their stewardship, really feel that we are too weak to carry out our obligations and wish to file a petition in moral and physical bankruptcy, that is an argument which, however ignominious, should certainly weigh with the House in these dangerous times. But is it true? I do not believe it is true."

Certainly no Jew could have said anything stronger, and this is merely an excerpt of the brilliant address, which should be read in full, and which appears in the *Jewish Frontier* (October 1943). Has the Prime Minister forgotten his own ringing words? There seems to be a poison in British public office which has been especially deadly to friends of the Jews.

Britain has apparently decided to set up an Arab state in Palestine in which the Jewish population is going to be reduced to one-third of the total. The fate of the Jews must, in the nature of the case, depend upon the good will of the Arab officials, who have repeatedly threatened—and tried to carry out their threats—acts of violence against the Jewish population.

Were there at the present time need of appeasing the Arabs, were there any serious danger of military uprising, even then the British act would be most reprehensible. But now especially, with Africa cleared of Axis troops and a strong Allied army in control, there is certainly no excuse for any appeasement policy. It is merely a direct attack against the Jewish position.

The White Paper is ostensibly intended for the Arab good. Britain knows full well, however, that the only Arabs it will benefit will be the effendis, whom it will help to keep their strangle hold on their peons. The Arab worker, peasant, and small shop keeper have benefited immeasurably from Jewish immigration, which is their only continued salvation.

Wendel Willkie, who, on his visit to Palestine, conferred with British, Arab and Jewish leaders, understands this very well. In a statement of his read before the meeting in Carnegie Hall on November 1st, he not only insisted that "the extent of Jewish immigration to Palestine must be measured by the needs of the Jewish people . . . in accordance with the international covenant made with them"; he also expressed his conviction that this would prove no obstacle to a solution of the Arab problem—"a solution which will be equitable both to the Jews and Arabs."

There is little time left now. The Jews of the United States must act immediately. All American Jewry is avowedly united against the White Paper. Even those who differ on the advisability of a commonwealth claim to be at one in this respect. Let us arrange meetings of demonstration, let us communicate with the members of our government and impress upon them the colossal crime Great Britain is on the point of committing against a helpless people. And in addition

to all other efforts, we suggest a monster petition signed by all adult Jews to be sent to the President of the United States, to show him how unanimously American Jewry reacts against the betrayal by Great Britain and hopes that our country may be able to stop England from besmirching its good name.

It would be a gruesome jest indeed, if of all the peoples, we, who have suffered most cruelly from German barbarity, should have our hopes for a brighter future shattered by an act of the victorious United Nations. We are confident that the conscience of our own United States will prevent this injustice, if we make clear to our government the extent of the threatened calamity. This is the time to act. The Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs is leading in the action. Let us follow implicitly.

THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL REFUGEE SERVICE

ONE of the philanthropic achievements of which American Jewry can justifiably be proud has been the past work of the National Refugee Service. Mushrooming rapidly in its early days, it did develop a program of rehabilitation and resettlement which is noteworthy for its success, in spite of professional and lay leadership which was far from top-notch, at times. Practices and techniques were evolved, lessons were learned, and a nation-wide organization of communities was perfected, which should provide a basis of permanent service to large numbers of our people,—if not for mis-called "refugees," then for others equally displaced, or misplaced.

The first campaign, which the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to German Refugees (now the National Refugee Service) conducted on its own, was in 1938 for $750,000. Since then its financial requirements have more than doubled. When the United Jewish Appeal was established in 1939, the National Refugee Service was one of the three beneficiaries. It has continued as such throughout the four years of the United Jewish Appeal campaigns.

Of the $14,428,252 raised by the United Jewish Appeal in 1942 (as of June 1943), the first $9,100,000 was divided as follows: The J.D.C., $4,525,000; the U.P.A., $2,575,000, and the N.R.S., $2,000,000. The difference between the allocations to the N.R.S. and the U.P.A. was only 25%, whereas the difference between the N.R.S. and the J.D.C. was about 125%. However, it should be kept in mind that the surplusage over the initial $9,100,000 was divided between only two of the partners, the J.D.C. and the U.P.A., in accordance with the initial ratios. The same procedure applied to the 1943 quota, except that the N.R.S. took a reduction to $1,500,000, out of a total U.J.A. campaign goal of $25,000,000, of which $11,500,000 was reported raised by July 1, 1943. It is understood that the N.R.S. request for 1944 will probably be for $1,200,000.

The natural assumption is that the amount which the National Refugee Service will be asking from American Jewry will be justified by its projected program for the coming year. An examination of the immigration figures for the past few years makes one wonder for what purposes so large a sum is required.

The numbers of *all* immigrants admitted to this country for four specific years were as follows:

1939	43,450
1941	23,737
1942	10,608
1943	4,705

It should be noted that, for the period from July 1, 1942 to June 30, 1943, only

4,705 immigrants were admitted, approximately 11% of the total number admitted four years ago.

If one would answer that current N.R.S. funds are needed primarily for giving a large number of refugees in New York City cash relief, the question naturally would arise whether the Jews of America are carrying New York Jewry's relief responsibilities, or whether the whole program of the National Refugee Service policy on cash relief should not be examined and modified. The question is tremendously important for the reason that every dollar diverted to the J.D.C. and the U.P.A. this coming year, the next, and in the post-war years will mean much more overseas than here in America. We are not counseling abandoning needy refugees to the American public, but there is something of an understanding in New York City that a refugee on relief with the National Refugee Service for five years should automatically be transferred to the relief rolls of New York City's Jewish Family Welfare agencies. The Jewish family welfare agencies of other Jewish communities throughout the United States have long ago shouldered that responsibility, and without waiting five years.

We challenge the justification of the National Refugee Service's receiving an allocation of $1,200,000 for 1944 unless the practical need for such a sum can be demonstrated on the basis of a valid and necessary program. Such a program might be established, but it will require a radical revision of its present objectives. It can fill a great unmet need, especially in the post-war years, only if it has the vision to see its potentialities, and the imagination to bring these visions to practical realization. It would, under the circumstances, withdraw from the tri-partite participation in the funds of the U.J.A. and make its bid on the basis of a new orientation for a new area where its knowledge, its experience and its nation-wide machinery could best be utilized. It would then stand on its own feet, and not sail under a questionable banner of service to refugees, when these no longer arrive in any significant numbers. Certainly it would be folly to assume that the post-war period will witness a return of the refugee flow of the earlier years.

These comments are offered in the most friendly and appreciative spirit. The National Refugee Service program of 1938, 1939 and 1940 is ceasing to exist. The National Refugee Service experience of eight years should be the foundation of a greatly needed national program for American Jewry for the next ten to twenty years, at least. Unless it can adapt itself to new needs, it should be liquidated more rapidly than the financial figures indicate. That would be rendering a greatly needed service to stricken Jewry overesas, where every single American dollar does the work of ten.

Will the National Refugee Service answer this challenge?

REALITIES AND VALUES

The Annual Report of the National Jewish Welfare Board for the year 1942 has just been issued. It is a report that merits more than casual reading. It tells the story of how the JWB has met the challenge of the war situation and is preparing for new responsibilities that will confront it when peace comes. The following statement by its executive director, Louis Kraft, is well borne out by the facts pointed to in the report: "Combining the description of the vast work of the JWB with the directories of professional personnel, local community committees, Jewish Community Centers and national organizations, one begins to understand the basic character

of the JWB—one might say its folk character. It is quite clearly a movement, born and sustained in the American environment and eagerly responsive to the needs of Jews for self-expression, and for participation in American life." The expansion of the JWB's activities by reason of the war is exemplified by the fact that, since 1940, its budget has increased twenty times, its professional staff has been enlarged from 28 to 297, the number of affiliated national organizations has grown from 16 to 37, and its Army-Navy Division includes—in addition to its national committee — 10 regional committees, 480 local committes in this country and 29 overseas. It has united in its work all elements of the Jewish community, and has established excellent cooperative relations with Christian communities and civil and military agencies. To its president, Frank L. Weil, and all who have cooperated with him in his administration, great credit is due for a truly remarkable record of achievement.

▼

THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOgraphic Congress which met in Mexico City recently adopted a resolution urging that American governments "absolutely reject any discriminatory policy or action of a racial character." The resolution further states that "any tendency aiming to encourage sentiments of racial superiority will be considered anti-scientific and against the high social principles of justice upheld by all American nations." Such a statement is gratifying for two reasons: it is itself a contribution to the cause of social justice and it shows that a great body of scientists is not merely concerned with ascertaining scientific truth, but also with giving effect to its implications for ethical conduct.

▼

ONE WOULD NATURALLY EXpect that religious organizations which profess faith in the fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men would be the first to protest against all racial discrimination. It is a sad reflection on the state of religion in America that many American churches draw the color line quite as shamelessly as theatres and other secular institutions. Two items reported by the *Religious News Service* during the month of October show, however, that the religious conscience is not dead to the issue. At the annual meeting of the Presbytery of the Southern Presbyterian Church it was proposed that the separate Negro synod be dissolved, and that the Negro churches be admitted to the presbyteries of the White organization. The other item comes from South Berkeley, Calif. Here there was recently organized an Interracial Community Church, set up after a survey had been conducted among local residents, both Negro and White, showing that 80 per cent were in favor of that undertaking.

▼

THE SALVATION ARMY USED to ask why all the good tunes should be monopolized by the Devil. We might well ask why all the good ideas should be monopolized by the organizations which stand outside oragnized Jewish life. On Sunday evening, October 31, at Carnegie Hall, in New York, the Emergency Committee for the Rescue of the Jews of Europe, conducted a rally. The following evening, the Zionist organizations conducted a rally, the occasion being the observance of Balfour Declaration Day. The Sunday evening rally was exciting, thrilling, moving. New voices were heard; new personalities were enlisted; there was drama, music, recitation (by no less a star than Orson Welles). The Monday evening meeting was pedestrian; without color, without drama, without the spark of creativity. The Emergency Committee is, so far as we know, not a membership

body to whom its leaders are responsible. The Zionist organizations are responsible, recognized, and respectable. Question: Why is it not possible to be respectable *and* creative? Mushroom organizations cannot be successfully discouraged so long as they provide the emotional drive which the established groups fail to provide.

▼

DISTURBING REPORTS HAVE been coming in from Palestine concerning serious schisms in the ranks of the leadership. David Ben Gurion has resigned as head of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency. Second hand reports of public opinion in Palestine are confusing. Some hail his resignation; others deplore it. Dr. Weizmann has been urged to proceed to Palestine; other reports say that it is very unlikely that he will go. At a time like this, when so much hangs in the balance, the Yishuv should present a united front. It is regrettable indeed that sharp differences should now emerge. American Jews will be deeply concerned, and will undoubtedly want to know all the facts before expressing opinions. We sincerely hope that the issues will be presented fully and clearly before very long.

▼

WHEN PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT issued Executive Order 9346, he set up the Fair Employment Practice Committee, for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of religious and racial minorities in the war industries. The Committee has had a stormy career; its chairman has been changed several times. Now comes a body-blow to the work of the Committee. Solicitor-General Warren asserts that the obligation was "not a mandatory but merely a directive." Therefore, to put it simply, Mr. Warren insists that the President did not say "posi*tive*ly." The Attorney General has been asked to give a ruling. We know very well that Attorney General Biddle's ruling will be accepted by the Committee only if it interprets the order as mandatory; otherwise, appeal will have to be made to the President himself. Would it not be wiser to ask Mr. Roosevelt himself what he had in mind? Thank God, he is still with us.

Judaism As Personal Salvation

By ASHER BLOCK

RELIGION can be viewed from two angles—the social and the personal. That the personal and social aspects of life are intimately related is fully granted. Every social situation involves individuals, and the individual is thoroughly interwoven in society. Nevertheless, in considering the mainsprings of human motivation, the most vital impulse is the consciousness of any human being, also his most elemental right, is *self-preservation*. All else, psychologically and ethically, emanates from that central fact. Society itself, through the "social contract," may be said to be the objectification of individual wills-to-live.

There is a whole area of human life which centers about the individual *per se*: his private thoughts, his yearnings, his fears; his appraisal of himself; his capacity to bear success or misfortune; his inner strength and courage; how he handles his habits, moods, and emotions; his attitudes toward life and death—in short, all that we might understand by *ben*

adam la-makom (relations between man and God) as distinct from *ben adam lahavero* (relations between man and man).

When the pious Jew, on the Holy Days, is moved at the reading of the *Berosh Hashanah* ("Who shall live, and who shall die . . .?), that is a deeply personal affair between him and God. Though our conceptions of life and death, reward and punishment may be different from those of our ancestors, the basic need for a positive relationship to the Unknown, the Infinite, and the Inevitable still remains.

Much of the ritual in Judaism, as also in most other faiths, revolves about "the crises" in human life—birth, adolescence, marriage, death. It is not mere accident that that which has best survived of traditional Judaism among the present "irreligious" generation is essentially of an intimate, personal nature—the *Bar Mitzvah* celebration, the *Huppah* ceremony, the *Kaddish, Yizkor,* and *Yahrzeit.*

I state these facts not to argue their adequacy, nor to condone the lack of social consciousness, but simply as manifestations of a deep-seated human need which religious leaders ought to try to satisfy. It is as much the function of religion to create *morale* as it is to foster morals.

The Prophets of Israel represent the crown of Jewish social idealism, yet the Prophets alone could never have answered all the religious needs of the Jew. When our grandparents were confronted with personal tragedy and sorrow, they turned to the Psalms rather than to the Prophets. These struck a personal note. "*I* will raise *mine* eyes unto the hills, whence will come *my* help?" "The Lord is *my* shepherd; *I* shall not want."

If we are to produce harmony in the social symphony of life, we must not only learn to play together, but we must see to it that each instrument, to begin with, is well tuned.

Active and Passive Religion

One of the reasons, no doubt, why many modern religious philosophers have tended to slight the personal aspect of religion is that, historically, that aspect was largely passive. Its objective was to comfort, adjust, and console; and in so doing, it frequently failed to arouse the individual to his responsibilities. More often than not, such religion lulled him into an acceptance of the *status quo* as the "will of God." It would be well, therefore, for us to consider carefully the question of passivity in religion.

All relationships of a human being to his environment, natural and social, may be divided into two categories: active and passive. In some instances, one adjusts the environment to himself; in others, one adjusts himself to his environment. Usually there is an interaction of the two.

Religion, in its historic expressions, has concerned itself with both these realms, in varying degrees of emphasis. When, for example, one Jewish tradition said, "All is within the control of Heaven, except man's fear of Heaven," it took both these areas into account, except that to God was entrusted what now seems to us an overwhelming proportion of life. They were *too passive,* we might say, in their relation to God. (Of course, the "all," which was conceived as determined, would shrink considerably in its scope if we should include under the concept of "fear of Heaven" the observance of the whole Torah and the Jewish way of life. That dictum would then place within the sphere of man's free will all that is "religious," and exclude that which is "secular." Needless to say, here again the proportion would depend upon our definition of these terms.)

In order to make the contrast between the active and the passive more vivid, let us scan some areas in which science is a decisive factor. Certain forms of disease

were once assumed to be incurable. Deaths which resulted from such causes were pronounced the judgment of God. The science of medicine has taught us otherwise. The same holds true of many economic and political ills of society. These were once presumed to be beyond human control. But the social sciences have served to sensitize us to the peril of ascribing to God that which is properly the responsibility of man. We recognize as a "sin of omission" indifference or tolerance toward that which should not be tolerated.

However, having made this point with all the vigor at our command, we glance at the other side of the ledger. Granted that reason and science and sociology have vastly extended the domain of man's stewardship in the world, it is still a far cry from his being "master of life." As human beings, and particularly as individuals, we have no choice but to be resigned, upon occasion, to the insuperable and the inevitable.

Shall religion, which, in the past, has been man's chief resort in situations that call for resignation, have nothing similar to offer us today?

To be sure, we are challenged to evolve an "equilibrium" between two opposing poles:

(a) Religion, in its active sense, bids us exert every effort to improve that which is improvable, in ourselves and in society.

(b) Religion, in its passive sense, bids us resign ourselves with equanimity of mind to that which, to our best insight, is beyond our control.

In the one instance, we are expected to *perform* the will of God; in the other, we are asked to *accept* it. The line of demarcation is not always clear. Here, at least, religion perhaps ought to confess that it does not know all the answers. This confession is one manifestation of the searching and yearning "to know God."

The traditionalist may claim that here he finds himself at an advantage, since Revelation stipulates for him what must be done and what may be left undone. However, at best, that is true only ritualistically. In the really crucial issues of life, he is as much "in search of God" as we are.

Consider, for example, that if a person is ill, both traditional and modern religion say to us: Perform God's will and cure him. Should he die, then in an equally religious mood, we acknowledge, "Blessed be the righteous Judge." Is it then religiously consistent to assert that it is *not* the will of God that one should be ill, but that it *is* God's will that he should pass away? Are we (traditionalist or modernist) less "religious" than some ancients who refused to heal the sick since that might be circumventing God's decree? No, in that respect we are not *less religious*—simply *more scientific!* To decide, in any given circumstance, whether religion demands action or resignation, depends upon the best knowledge and experience available in all branches of human research at that particular time. The ethical maxim of the Fathers is well borne out: "An ignoramus cannot be pious." In this matter, science is not only not opposed to religion, it becomes its indispensable ally.

The religious philosophy, at its best, therefore, is one that is calculated to produce maximum human happiness. On the one hand, it aims to elicit the most creative human response, wherever and whenever such response can help reduce suffering and discomfort in the world. On the other hand, it strives to induce the greatest human adjustment to events that are ineluctable and to those situations which are clearly beyond human control.

Resolving Inner Conflicts Through Faith

In order to attain this happiness, however, it is obvious that we must first resolve the apparent contradition of attitudes involved. If we are to obviate a dangerous dualism in religion, we must evolve the kind of integrated, comprehensive faith that will encompass both the active and passive orientations.

The term "faith," to be sure, has a forbidding, obsolescent ring to many modern ears. It is frequently associated with credulity, and almost always contrasted with science. However, the concept of faith, as we here hope to employ it, is a matter of simple wisdom and practical need. Whenever we find ourselves in a position that calls for action, and we lack conclusive knowledge to direct us, we of necessity act upon faith.

Here is a common illustration. None of us can adduce incontestible "proof" that the sun will rise tomorrow morning. Yet, on the strength of the well established invariability of the laws of the universe, all of us act and plan our daily lives *on the assumption* that the sun will rise. We have faith in the reliability of the solar system.

Such faith, of course, represents a maximum of confidence. Since there is no evidence to the contrary, it is founded upon an infinite probability, and hence approximates certainty. (From this point of view, "miracles," if conceived as interruption of the regular processes of nature, only serve to weaken our faith in those processes.)

In considering human life and society, the same element of faith functions on the same principle—except that the probabilities are not as great. When we say we have faith in the future of democracy, we have no means of *proving* that democracy will succeed. What we mean is this: after surveying and weighing the social forces (past and present) that make for democracy side by side with those forces and tendencies that make for dictatorship—and impelled by the nature of things to choose one to the exclusion of the other — we prefer to "take our chances" with democracy.

Similarly with belief in God. We have but one life to live, and we must live it on the basis of one of two alternative suppositions—either that this universe is an "accident," one in which (as Bertrand Russel puts it) man's life is brief and powerless, "on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark," or that this universe has "design," meaning, purpose, and the promise of individual self-fulfilment. Either choice is an act of faith, since neither position can be substantiated by scientific investigation. The choice is not between faith and no faith, but between a positive faith and a negative.

Just as in a legislature there is discussion pro and con and, when action becomes mandatory, a vote is taken and the entire body is committed to the majority decision, so in human personality, if we are to live decisively and not endlessly "halt between two opinions," each one of us must make a spiritual, cosmic "majority decision" as to whether this universe is God-inspired or not. And once that decision is made, we proceed to act *as if* the entire universe were of one spiritual consistency. We cannot religiously conceive of a dichotomy within the cosmos—part of it good, part of it evil—with God identified only with the good, for then God ceases to be coextensive with the wholeness of existence.

That the universe as a whole is of a positive character is not a difficult assumption for an intelligent human being to make, since that part of it which science has already revealed to us is essentially intelligible, creative, and law-abiding. (Rabbi Milton Steinberg, in The Reconstructionist, Vol. VIII,

No. 4, has presented the position that the religious interpretation of reality is more plausible, more practicable, and of greater simplicity than its alternative.)

It is because of such coordinated, all-embracing positive faith that the religious person can adjust himself serenely to the unknown as well as to the known, to that which controls him as well as to that which he controls, to death as well as to life. If the universe is positive, then there can be no intrinsic evil in it—then all is of God.

If it be asked: What of earthquakes, tornadoes, etc., which obviously are not man-made, yet are destructive of human life?—the religious answer must be that here is one aspect of the universe still unintelligible to us—not evil, but unintelligible. The termination of human life as such, does not necessarily constitute an evil in itself, for then the very reality of death would confront us with a universal, ineradicable evil.

If it be further said, "then you must posit some form of immortality," the response is again an affirmative one. An absolute oblivion and cessation of life at the grave are highly incongruous with a belief in abiding, religious values of personality. That is not to say that immortality can be described, or even adequately defined—which, incidentally, is equally true of the God-idea itself. These concepts, however, are integral to the religious thought-pattern, predicated on a central premise—a positive affirmation regarding the universe and human personality.

A Two-Fold Challenge

But faith is seldom a "finished product." In a universe where life's evaluations perpetually change, one would hardly expect a static belief to serve our highest needs. Faith, like any other aspect of a living organism, is a continuous, dynamic process.

Just as in a law-making body the majority may "overrule" a minority time and again without effecting the latter's disappearance, so life's affirmations rarely succeed in silencing all "opposition." Faith is continually challenged by doubt, and the positive confronted with the negative. Unless we can conceive of a time when the unknown shall become known and mystery be no more, we had better reconcile ourselves to a state of a continuing equilibrium.

That equilibrium, however, will be a *religious* ones as long as a "plurality," or "priority," of the positive element persists. It is that priority which renders the passive subordinate to the active, and evil subservient to the good.

Another, perhaps more serious, challenge to faith comes from the realm of experience. Many an individual who may never have been tempted to contrast alternative philosophies of life, is nonetheless susceptible to conflicting experiential moods. It is a safe assertion that more faiths have probably been shattered by negative emotions than by all the agnostics on earth.

This emphasis is true of most matters that are beyond the reach of scientific verification. Two people, for example, might discuss the subject of love. One may speak of it simply and in understanding terms, while the other will analyze and dissect it as under a microscope. And it is not at all unlikely that the difference may lie in the fact that one has fallen in love, while the other has read about it in books. The appreciation of music, art, and literature comes primarily through the experience of them. So, too, with religion. "*Experience* and see," says the Psalmist, "that the Lord is good."

In this regard, there ought to be no doubt in anyone's mind about the terrific impact of social conditions upon personal

faith in God. It would be ironic, indeed, to tell a man who is unemployed and starving, "See that the Lord is good." Yet it is *because* of this great influence that a counter-force must be found to save the individual from a crushing sense of inferiority. Once a person is overcome by a feeling of insignificance, insecurity, or despair, he loses all his effectiveness as a member of society. Thus, in a sense, social salvation is dependent upon personal salvation.

Historically, religion alone has been able to discharge this cardinal function on behalf of the individual. This was particularly so in the life of the Jew. Despite the tremendous negative forces about him —in great measure beyond his control— he was able spiritually to rise above them and reaffirm his faith in God.

Today, it will be agreed, we need that salvation no less. We can strive to achieve it most effectively—through prayer.

The Role of Prayer in Personal Religion

Prayer is another of the traditional concepts which is in need of *revaluation.*

As was already indicated, faith is frequently challenged *intellectually* by the "problem of evil," and *psychologically* by the experience of it. However, in view of the fact that our fundamental faith is positive in nature and universal in scope, we realize that the force of that challenge comes not so much from its truth and reality as from its impact and immediacy. None of us is completely free of doubting moods or tempers of despair, but that does not mean that we have necessarily surrendered our basic faith. The person who is thrown "off balance" by a personal disillusionment or a disconcerting headline is all too familiar to us, but in many instances such a person has lost nothing but his perspective. *Some technique is required to enable each one of us to maintain, as consistently as possible, as broad (hence, as true) a perspective as possible, of the society and the universe in which we live.* The broadest perspective, for the religionist, is God; the technique is prayer. Prayer, therefore, is our means of communing with God.

Prayer, by asserting the positive, prevents us from succumbing to the negative. Prayer, by underscoring the active, empowers us to surmount the passive. In brief, prayer affirms the Divinity within the universe and within ourselves.

Prayer is less a matter of words than one of attitude or frame of mind. In the broadest sense, anything which confirms our conviction regarding the inherent goodness, beauty, and intelligibility of the world—be it the inspiration of literature, the experience of art, or the comprehension of truth—is of the essence of prayer. Ritual performances as well assume a prayer-like character if their purpose is to establish self-identification with the Divine.

In the light of the above, the act of praying is not (as some believe) a means of persuading God to do *our* will, but rather a means of getting ourselves to acknowledge and to perform *God's* will. The primary objective of prayer is to place him who prays in rapport with God.

There are two significant by-products of all true worship: (1) an intellectual sense of *peace;* and (2) a psychological sense of *power.*

A feeling of peace and harmony issues from the realization of the essential oneness of reality. In the process of prayer, the individual rises above the divisions, the conflicts, and the tensions of his immediate surroundings, and concentrates rather on the Unity which transcends diversity. He, then, is enabled to return with keener perspective and refreshed spirit to the tasks that lie at hand.

The feeling of power is experienced through the awareness awakened by prayer of the divine potentialities that we all

possess. Prayer is intended to do with human charcter and personality what science does with nature. Science never created steam, electricity, or ether waves; it discovered them ready-made in the universe and harnessed them for social use. According to all indications, there is still unlimited cosmic energy waiting to be released. We, too, need to tap the maximum creative power resident within human personality. The psychologist William James disclosed the astounding fact that the average person utilizes but a small fraction of his innate talents and capabilities—the rest goes to waste.

If we are to reshape the social order into a Kingdom of God, we shall need every available resource of human adjustment and personal power.

Jewish tradition is replete with applications and techniques of worship. Our ancestors, fully cognizant of its beneficent qualities, by virtue of their own experience, seemed to sense that what nutritious food is to the body, wholesome prayer is to the spirit. It was more than mere coincidence, quite likely, that they instituted prayer three times a day along with their meals.

The effect of historic Jewish worship and ritual was to induce a maximum God-consciousness, from the early *Modeh Ani* to the bedtime *Shema.* The performance of the manifold *mizvot* was, in a sense, a form of communion, and often was preceded by a formula of personal identification with the will of God. ("Behold, I am thoroughly prepared to fulfill the bidding of my Creator. . . .")

It is interesting that in Jewish liturgy prayers of affirmation greatly exceed those of petition. ("How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob" . . . "The soul which Thou hast entrusted unto me is pure" . . . "The breath of every living being shall bless Thy name" . . . "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.") Even the study of *Torah,* which is an affirmation of ethical truth and knowledge, has traditionally been incorporated as part of worship.

The concept of "pronouncing a *berakhah*"—so natural to the religious consciousness of the Jew that Rabbi Meir urged a hundred such pronouncements every day—is nothing other than an affirmative expression of appreciation and gratitude for the positive experiences of our life: the availability and enjoyment of life-giving food, the comfort of new and warm garments, the sight of trees in bloom, the inspiration of a great personality, or the awareness of the majesty of God.

In the current universal crisis, when mankind is in especial need of courage to destroy the old world and faith to build the new, Judaism can become for us the source of our personal as well as our social salvation.

Book Notes

By SAMUEL DININ

IN PRAISE OF WISDOM, by Jacob Klatzkin. L. B. Fischer Publishing Co., New York. pp. 312-350.

THE works of Dr. Jacob Klatzkin, the noted Jewish philosopher and psychologist, biographer of Spinoza, author of a dictionary of philosophy and many other books on philosophy, and editor of the Encyclopedia Judaica, have hitherto been available only to students of Hebrew and German. It is fortunate for American readers that his newest book has been translated from the Hebrew into English. He is not only a first rate thinker, but a writer with a felicitous style, who writes with deep insight and rare lucidity. "In Praise of Wisdom" is a unique book, containing short provocative essays, larger psychological essays, and a collection of brilliant aphorisms. The title of the first part, "Life Microscoped," might well serve as a title for the whole book; it is the review which should be called "In Praise of the Wisdom of Jacob Klatzkin." Here are observations and reflections in the grand Hebrew tradition of the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastes, and Ethics of the Fathers. It is not a book which can be read at one sitting. It must be sipped like a good liqueur; and will be found as warming and as stimulating. Or as Klatzkin says: "It is well for a thought to come light-footed, insidious, making no advertisement of its invasion of the soil and of the holes it digs for its seed." The temptation to quote at length is great, and one more example will suffice. " 'I am that I am'—the God of Israel is Being which endures for eternity. The worship of Being is fundamental in Judaism. Judaism loves life in all of its concrete manifestations; it justifies life. The sense of reality, and not the spirit of abstraction, is its vital quality." But the reader is advised to sip for himself of Klatzkin's wisdom.

JEWISH LIFE IN OUR TIME, by Judah Pilch. Behrman's Jewish Book Shop, New York, 1943. *pp.* 244. $2.75.

THIS book "aims to help the average American Jew orient himself to the Jewish group of which he is a part." It is the second volume of a comprehensive study which deals with Jewish life in the contemporary world. The first volume, soon to be published, examines the demographic, political and economic status of the Jew in the modern world. The recent volume attempts to evaluate and analyze the organizational and cultural life of the Jewish people today. Part One deals with the Cultural Life of the Jews, and Part Two with the Organizational Life of the Jews. As an introductory volume on contemporary Jewish life for "the average Jew," it is excellent indeed. Most of the chapters are brief, the longest being, characteristically enough, on Jewish literature, Education, Zionism and Palestine (Mr. Pilch is a director of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Rochester and is a staunch Hebraist and Zionist). Some of the chapters are good; others contain too much name-listing. Some of the topics are "evaluated"; others are not. But when Mr. Pilch does speak out, he speaks forthrightly and with firm faith in the possibilities of the creative survival of Jewish life and Jewish culture in this country. All Jews will find in this volume a ready

compendium of useful information on those aspects of contemporary Jewish life dealing with Jewish culture and institutions. Rabbis and teachers will find this an excellent textbook for use in adolescent and adult study groups.

Music Notes

By JUDITH K. EISENSTEIN

THE first serious event of the season in Jewish Music is scheduled for November 10, in the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. This will be a recital of compositions by Mordecai Sandberg. It is a serious event, as contrasted with popular rehashing of favorite folk songs, costume fripperies, pseudo-scientific presentations of Jewish music history and earnest enough home talent programs. In this recital there will be new and original music by a composer whom we cannot afford to leave unheard. Gifted artists have taken the time and the trouble to study and prepare for performance material which is completely new to their repertoires; material which is far from easy to learn and to interpret. It will be a difficult recital, probably, because all new music is harder to enjoy than old. It will be controversial and challenging. No concert of contemporary music can be otherwise if it be honest. We are obliged to listen to it all, to wrangle over it, to hail it or damn it, to love it or loathe it or be left unmoved by it, to remember it or to forget it. But we must hear it.

The composer, a physician, a conscientious vegetarian, a deep-dyed mystic, and a scholar in the science of acoustics, is one of the unique personalities produced by Jewish life. A writer would be tempted to exploit him for story material, or biographical study. He is a soft-spoken, smiling gentleman with the capability of becoming highly excited and deeply indignant; a mild-mannered, gentle soul with the quiet stubbornness which keeps him rigidly to his abstention from animal food, nay even from wearing materials, such as leather and wool, derived from animals; a stubbornness which has kept him from his profession, from his children, from the land of Palestine which he loves; a strength of will which has kept him indoors for three years, uninterrupted except by the Sabbath, in writing over three thousand pages of music manuscript.

We had seen him last, before this voluntary retirement, in the role of instructor. Sandberg was teaching the elements of the micro-tonal system, and an oddly assorted class, including this writer, a retired cantor, two gentile lady music students, and a young American composer, struggled to understand it. To our surprise they did. Sandberg talked a little English, a little Yiddish, some Hebrew, German and French, in the effort to make it clear. But he talked with warmth and humor. He demonstrated on wonderful instruments of his own devising, such as a guitar fretted to play third and quarter tones, or a harmonica with many more sounds to its keyboard than we knew existed. He made us hear and sing intervals intentionally, which we would have sung only by accident previously. He was a teacher whose basic premises we will not discuss here, but whose conviction and logic, whose clarity and patience were unbounded.

Sandberg disappeared into his studio, after that, and has only now emerged to the outside world. He has been driven, he says, by a force beyond himself. The particular compulsion has been to complete his musical setting for the entire book of Psalms. This musical setting is written in two forms, one for solo and chorus, a capella, and one in symphonic form, for chorus, soli and orchestra. This work was initiated actually some twenty years ago, in Palestine, where the composer was still practicing medicine, but at the same time becoming acquainted with the music of the orient, the music of Arabs and of Jews from strange parts of the world. Simultaneously he composed many other works, gay little songs, religious choruses, and instrumental works. He was fascinated by the scales and modes, the strangely tuned instruments of the East, and has constantly experimented with music which, he believes, should be as meaningful to people of the East as to those of the West. In this fusion of the Orient and the Occident he believes there can be the realization of a truly universal music.

The Psalms were delayed and put aside until this last period, when he went at them with an exhausting frenzy. Influenced by Hasidism, he is a profoundly mystical philosopher, and has consequently based his music on a mystical interpretation of the Book of Psalms. He treats it as a complete unit, dramatizing the theme of Redemption, Messiah, Geulah. While each psalm is a separate and independent composition, they all take their place in a single huge pattern. Dr. Sandberg tells us that a complete hearing of the opus would take no less than sixty hours; a good month of concerts, in other words. Needless to say, such a project is not being contemplated at present.

However, at the forthcoming concert, some brief excerpts will be performed for the first time. The fifteenth Psalm, "In Thy Pavilion, Oh Lord," will be sung by Moshe Rudinow with piano accompaniment. Also there will be an instrumental version for string quartet and piano of the 150th Psalm, the great concluding Halleluyah Psalm. The last verse, "All living things shall praise the Lord, Halleluyah!" will epitomize the mystic ideal of *En Sof*, no end, or end like a beginning).

In addition, there will be a number of other compositions, some written at an earlier period, some very recently. The opening number will consist of four preludes and a Birthday March, symbolizing the conquest of joy over suffering. Bruno Eisner will play the piano, with the string quartet. A setting of the "Thirteen Attributes" has been published. We have studied it, and found it moving and beautiful, as we have also found the "Vision of Isaiah" with its stirring conclusion of "Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh." These songs are to be sung by Rudinow. There will be a Cantata of Victory and Peace based on the 52nd chapter of Isaiah, for contralto (Ruth Kisch-Arndt) and piano; a Hymn, Aria and Dance for clarinet (Simeon Belison) and string quartet. The hymn expresses the composer's conviction that every moment in life is unique and must be received in festive spirit, and the dance expresses joy in spite of the fleeting character of life.

These symbolisms have been described by the composer himself. Whether they will transfer their meanings to us remains to be seen. The courageous and joyous philosophy has certainly infected the personality of the composer. Whether it is possible to transmit it through the abstraction of music is a mooted question. It is of great value to us to realize that here is yet another expression of the great vitality of Judaism, which drives its children from within, along strange and unwonted paths perhaps, even knotted and thorny, but toward fertility and growth.

Correspondence

A Reaction to Our Pamphlets

Sirs:

This letter serves to thank you for sending me your excellent series of pamphlets. . . .

So penetrating is their analysis of our problem, and so forceful is the logic of their plan of attack, that the reader catches himself nodding approval whith each paragraph. The case for Reconstructionism is most persuasive because it repeatedly strikes responsive chords of the reader's experience. Most thinking Jews have realized that interest in things Jewish is fast ebbing, and, I dare say, have soundly analyzed the causes: loss of "all taste for otherworldly salvation," indeed, of faith in the existence of God; flowing from this, belief that services and ritual were futile mummery; the "inconvenience" of attending Hebrew school while the other children were out at play; the boredom born of outmoded pedagogic methods and appalling unimaginativeness in use of subject matter in those schools; the embarrassment attendant upon social and economic discrimination; and all the others so well described by your writers.

The overwhelming majority of Jews who have been caught on the horns of the dilemma, who are not accepted as equals by their neighbors, yet find no refuge in their Jewishness, have, I believe, lost hope in any solution, and continue to drift aimlessly, ridden by an inferiority complex. They are the Micawbers of Dr. Steinberg's paper "To Be or Not to Be a Jew." The fact that they outnumber the assimilationists (who have long needed exposing), and that the assimilationists can't, by their strategy, escape the dilemma, is a source of hope in the eventual reversal of the tide of indifference.

The Reconstructionist platform and program is the only sensible and workable plan of attack on the problem that I have seen. Although it has its difficulties for me, it is a program which I, and the overwhelming majority of American Jews can, and should, support.

The strongest point of the Reconstructionist approach, as I read the pamphlets, is the emphasis upon the fact that Judaism is a culture, as well as a religion, and that it has a definite history, and aspirations. Most Jews are woefully ignorant of the content of our culture, history, and aspirations, and all but unaware of the fact of their existence. I do not except myself from their number. That we will hold our heads higher, and feel a closer kinship, with the spread of knowledge of our heritage cannot be gainsaid. Nor can we deny what seems to me the platitude that a people with a rich past and dreams of a richer future will be creative in their tradition.

I have said that the Reconstructionist platform has not been without its difficulties for me. In your best tradition of sparing the whitewash and facing unlovely truth, I confess that I have lost faith in the existence of a God who watches over me, who sent me into this world and who will one day take me away, who lives as a guarantee that the world will someday be clothed in happiness, or even that the world will continue to get better. I have never had to placate Him, or to call upon Him in my extremities—and there have been extremities. I wonder, then, whether other Jews might reject Reconstructionism because of its insistence on "the centrality of religion in Jewish civilization," because the platform states that "Faith in God has always permeated, and should continue to permeate, every phase of Jewish life." Section II of the Program wisely gives great latitude to the individual in his search for God, but does it embrace a philosophy which places man's salvation in his own hands? The Divine One has something of the redundant about Him in the old bromide "God helps those who help themselves." Moralities and philosophies of life, it seems to me, may be man-made, and still capture the adherence of men and derive therefrom a certain validity.

Zionism, which, in any event, means many things to many men, has not had a strong attraction for me. I have learned that nationalism is a two-sided coin, and believed that certain Zionists were praying for the wrong side to come out on top. I believe that Great Britain's "fine Italian hand" (to mix a metaphor somewhat) should be removed from Palestine, but I equally believe that Palestine labor unions should not exclude Arabs, as I believe some do. If I am wrong in this impression, I should appreciate correction. However, I feel that the "national Jewish commonwealth" which you wish to see emerging in Palestine will be such a social and economic society as I should approve: your aspirations for our own American commonwealth are an earnest of that.

I know that this kind of letter was more than you bargained for when you asked my reactions to your pamphlets. If it befuddles you, it has certainly cleared the atmophere for me. For the first time in many moons I have done some thinking (not too profound, I know), and can only hope that it hasn't been sloppy.

I may say that the material you have sent me, and gleanings from *The Reconstructionist*, which I receive periodically, will be well employed in enriching the services which I conduct on this airdrome. The men have already been reading them in the chaplain's library, where I have placed them.

LEONARD J. ROSENFELD,
Lieutenant, 100th Bomb. Group,
U. S. Army, England.